

Social Media and Performance of Micro Enterprises in Moshi Tanzania

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Abstract

Social media are gaining popularity and are increasingly used in regular operations of many organizations, including Micro Enterprises (MEs). Several studies have thus developed interests on investigating the impact of social media in MEs. Unfortunately most of the existing studies either did not consider performance factor of MEs or were not done in the context of developing counties like Tanzania. It is on this ground that this study explored how social media influence the MEs' performance in the context of customer's base, sales growth, profit maximization, and brand enhancement. Specifically the study focused on identifying the most used social media by MEs; influence of social media to the performance of MEs; and how MEs use social media in their business process. Data were collected in Moshi, Tanzania from a representative sample of 90 MEs. The study adopted case study research design where structured questionnaires and interview were used to collect data. Findings depict that all else being equal, the use of social media enhance business performance. WhatsApp was found to be the most, preferred social media by MEs, followed by Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. On the other hand, awareness, risks and insecurity of information, and costs was some of the observed challenges that hinder MEs from using social media. It was concluded that effective use of social media is an efficient tool for enhancing MEs performance. Among others, the study calls for further research on financial and marketing aspect of social media

and relative involvement associated with the possible solution toward the challenges of social media

Keywords: Social Media, Firm's Network, Performance, Micro Enterprises, Tanzania.

1. Introduction

Micro Enterprises (MEs) are increasingly recognized as important economic base for any economy (Lameck, 2014; Kazungu, Ndiege Mchopa, & Moshi, 2014). They contribute significantly to poverty alleviation and economic development and, training ground for the development and upgrading entrepreneurship skills (Kazungu & Panga, 2015). Ngugi (2012) pointed out that MEs create employment, generate income, investments, and increase manufactured exports. Katua (2014) and Ankunda (2010) added that they increase Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and according to Okeyo Gathungu, and K'Obonyo (2014) MEs increase government revenue through tax collections. According to Rao and Joshi (2011) MEs constitute over 90% in the economies. It is because of these notable impacts they are viewed as the engine of global economic growth. Globally their Gross Domestic Product (GDP) percentage contributions are 60.0 % in China, 57.0 % in Germany, 55.3 % in Japan and 50% in UK. And, in East Africa, the sector contribute about 18% of GDP in Kenya (Katua, 2014), 70 % in Uganda (Ankunda, 2010) and 27% in Tanzania (URT, 2012). They contribute to over 60% of the Kenyan population (Katua, 2014), more than 2.5 million people in Uganda (Ankunda, 2010), and over 23.4% of the total employment in Tanzania (URT, 2012).

Despite the fact that MEs contributions to socio-economic development are widely acknowledged, MEs almost all over the world are facing many impediments that hinder their growth performance. One of the constraints facing MEs is access to and dissemination of business information. While MEs are faced with such a challenge, studies indicate a growing use of social media by different categories of users including entrepreneurs. Social media have got the potential of providing¹ entrepreneurs a possibility to share business information with their customers and suppliers. Moreover, social media creates highly interactive platforms through which individuals and communities share, discuss, and modify user-generated content (information) (Kaplan & Michael, 2010). They provide an excellent opportunity for businesses to interact with stakeholders and carry message to large audience (Burson, 2010). With the increased use of internet based communications, more and more businesses use social media to communicate with their stakeholders. Social media has recently been adapted by many businesses by infusing a mix of advertisements, sales promotion, and public relations to create a customer focused message. This is evidence by the existence of a noteworthy number of businesses using social medias like Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, WhatsApp and many more others.

¹ A group of internet based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of web 2.0 and that allow the creation and exchange of user generation content (Kaplan and Heinlein, 2010). It is a social networking sites which includes face book, twitter, and MySpace (Harrison and Thomas, 2009). It relates to a self-generated, authentic conversation between people about a particular subject of mutual interest, built on the thought and experience of the participants (Evans, 2008). It also covers a wide variety of 'online and mobile 'word of mouth forums including social networking websites, blogs, company sponsored discussion board and chat rooms, consumer to consumer email, consumer product or service ratings websites and forums, internet discussion boards and forums, and sites containing digital audio, image, movies or photographs, to name a few (Hollensen, 2011).

It is thus evident that businesses have adopted and started using social media in order to improve their performance. Consequently, several studies have been carried out to investigate the impact of social media use in business. For instance, Bhanot (2009) examined the impact of social media on Indian organizations performance in terms of customer base and brand awareness, Costantine (2013) looked at how social media and organizational performance in form of efficiency and effectiveness, And Smits and Magos (2009) investigated on social media and business capabilities and performance. Unfortunately, these and several other similar studies focused only on performance of civil society organizations. They neither explained the effect social media as a firm network has on performance of MEs nor do they cover the context of developing countries like Tanzania.

The current study thus explores how social media influence on performance of Micro Enterprises (MEs) in Moshi, Tanzania. The study is organized into six sections as follows: section two presents the literature review and the theoretical underpinning; section three provides the research methods, including population and sample, model specifications and measurement of variables, research design and the goodness of measure and testing of hypotheses. Section four presents the result and hypothesis test, and section five is about the conclusion. And finally, the managerial implications of the study, limitations and direction for future research are discussed under section 6.

Literature Review

Social Media and Performance of MSEs

The use of social media has recently gained rapid prominence among businesses as in many other areas (Icha & Agwu, 2015). Social media uses have been considered useful as it helps to increase customer base (Bhanot, 2009), enhance efficiency and effectiveness (Constantine, 2013), and helping organization in partnership building with other organizations (Braskov, 2011). Moreover, Social media increases exposure and traffic (Stelzner, 2014), creates business and consumer relationships (Icha & Agwu, 2015), enhances connectivity (Cachia, 2008) and it is a very effective mobilization tool (Eltantawy & Wiest, 2011). There are several social media platforms, but studies indicate Facebook as the leading in the World. In 2016, for example, Facebook had more than 1.59 billion monthly active users, and it was estimated that more than 1 million small and medium-sized businesses used Facebook to advertise their business (Maina, 2016). Other popular social media platforms are YouTube, Twitter, WhatsApp, LinkedIn, Instagram, Google+ and Tumblr. In Tanzania Facebook was also leading in 2016 with 3,700,000 subscribers (InternetWordStats, 2016). Many global corporate companies are increasingly using social media especially Facebook and Twitter to markets their products to their customers (Burford, 2011). In Tanzania, businesses are using social media to promote dialogue and meaning interactions between organizations and their stakeholders (O'Rourke, 2010). This is attributed by the fact that social media has a significant influence on social change particularly but not limited to issues that targeted organizational customers.

There is no single approach that is used to measure business performance. Researchers do adopt different approaches from time to time depending on the nature of data available, respondents, business size and industry they operate. However the most common indicators that can be used to measure organizational performance are Return on Assets (ROA), return on equity (ROE), and profit margin (Galbraith & Scendel, 1983). Other performance measures

are sales level, sales growth rate, cash flow, gross profit margin, return on investment and retained earnings (Kilonzo, 2012), sales volumes, number of employees and net income (Wanjiru, 2013). As in numerous previous studies (Kumar & Singh, 2014; Wanjiru 2013; Kilonzo, 2012), this study measured performance of MEs in Moshi by using increase in sales, number of customers, profit and product awareness, and brand enhancement.

Theoretical Underpinning

In this study, Resource Mobilizing Theory of Social Media (RMTSM) by Eltantawy and Wiest (2011) was employed with a major focus on how social media as a network resource, affect firm's performance. This theory borrow from the work of scholar on RMTSM such as Buechler (1993) and Jenkins (1983) which state that resource such as time, money, organizational skills, and certain social or political opportunities are very central toward success in any social movements. The RMTSM asserts that business organizations with access to and effective use of social media have competitive advantage over the others who are indifferent to such networking resource (Icha & Agwu, 2015). Proponents of this theory argues that resource social media can be well used by owner-managers of micro enterprises to inform their customers about their offerings and create a two way communication, and benefit of social media which influence the performance of their businesses (Stephan & Galak, 2009; Oh, 2009) and employee performance in terms of knowledge, skills, ability, qualification, productivity and motivation level (Ashraf, 2014). Also the RMTSM show how business must look on communication media and their impact by understand the nature and characteristics and changing buying patterns of their customers in the modern society, as social media focuses on the modernizing technology that encourage their business process which will transform their relationship with customers. Based on this theoretical background it is hypothesized that:

H_A: All else being equal, access to social media will be exhibit a linear relationship with performance of Micro Enterprises in Moshi Tanzania.

From this premise, the current study proposed the hypothesized model of the relationship between the study variables in figure 1. The use of social media is the independent variable which is entrepreneurs' access to and use of social media (Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp and Instagram are specific focus of this study) in communicating business offerings to the group of targeted actual and potential customers. The dependent variable which is the performance of youths owned micro enterprises is defined by performance aspects such as profit growth, increase sales, number of customers served, and product awareness.

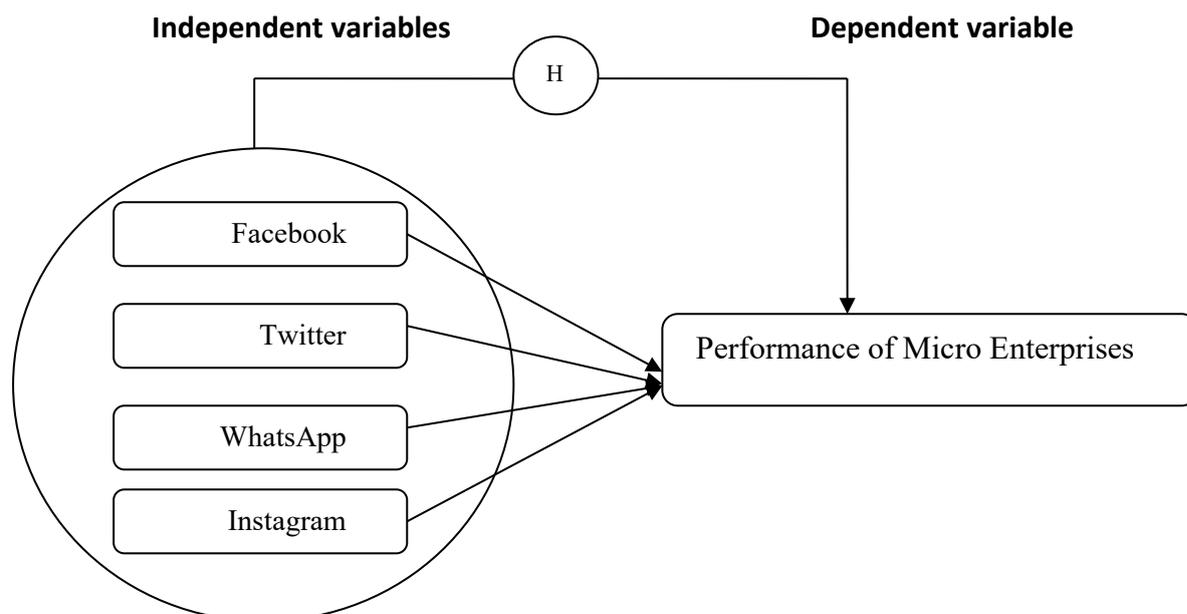


Figure 1: Hypothesized model of the relationship between the study variables

3. Materials and Methods

This study used case study as a research design as it has some flexibility in the methods of data collection than other designs. The research was conducted in Moshi Municipal, where primary data were collected with the use of interview and questionnaire among owner-managers of MEs. Respondents were selected by using simple random sampling. Secondary data were collected through various websites, journals, and newspapers in review on social media. Data were processed and analyzed with the use of qualitative and quantitative methods. This involved examination of data and information in numerical and non-numerical approaches. The study employed descriptive statistics like frequencies, percentage, mean, and standard deviation and inferential statistics to analyze and interpret the result. Data analysis was done with the aid of the Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) and Microsoft Office Excel 2007. The study used the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) as a statistical instrument employed for testing the hypothesis formulated. The decision rule is that we accept the hypothesis if the F-statistic value (from the ANOVA table) is greater than the critical tabled value at 5% significant level and degree of freedom otherwise we reject the hypothesis.

Model Specification and Measurements

To examine the relationship between social media and performance of MEs, the study used binary logistic regression analysis to establish relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable. Logistic regression involves fitting an equation of the following form to data:

$$\text{Logit}(P_i) = \alpha + \beta_1 X_{1i} + \beta_2 X_{2i} + \beta_3 X_{3i} + \dots + \beta_p X_{pi} + \epsilon_0 \dots \dots \dots (1)$$

Where:

Logit (Pi) = Y = dependent variable and represent the probability of having high or low performance of MEs, coded as 0 or 1 respectively.

X₁=Facebook: Dummy 1 if used, 0 otherwise

X₂=Twitter: Dummy, 1 if used, 0 otherwise

X₃=WhatsApp: Dummy, 1 if used, 0 otherwise

X₄=Instagram: Dummy, 1 if used, 0 otherwise

$\beta_1 - \beta_p$ = Regression coefficients
 α = Intercept
 ε_0 = The error term (disturbance term)

4. Findings and Hypothesis Testing

The demographic and social characteristics of respondents examined in the study included sex, age, and education level. The issue of sex was taken in consideration during the selection of respondent the study found that there was a difference in term of gender representation among the respondents where findings in table 1 shows that the number of female youth entrepreneurs using social media exceeded that of male. There were 56.7% female and 43.3% male. These findings are in line with Pew Research Center (2005) who reported that 8% of male were using social media compared to female 6%, starting in 2009 women started using social media slightly rates than men. However, this balance has shrunk yet again in recent years, today, 68% of female and 62% of male report social media usage.

As for the respondents age brackets, the study findings in table 1 reveals that youths between the age 18 and 35 made the majority of entrepreneurs who use social media compared to older generation. This observation is in line with Novell (2012) who argue that young people make the majority of people who use ICT in Tanzania and are the ones who in most cases use the social media. The level of education attained by the respondents was one of the key observations in this study. It was observed that majority 67.8% of the respondents had bachelors' degree followed by those who had diploma 28.9%, these findings might be associated with the fact that the selected respondent have special skills that enable them to move forward often in the key areas like finance, legal service, business administration and IT toward the establishment of Micro Enterprises. In addition, the study intended to know the kind of the business most youths operates. Findings in table 1 reveals that more youths are operating in merchandise (58.9%) followed by service firms (25.6%) and small scale manufacturing 15.6%. The result indicate that merchandise is mostly preferred as it is easier and do not cost a lot of their study time as long as it is only involving buy and sell business with high profit margins.

Table 1:
Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Gender	Percentage (%)	Age bracket	Percentage (%)	Education level	Percentage (%)	Business Type	Percentage (%)
Male	43	18-25	50.0	Certificate	3.3	Merchandise	58.9
Female	57	26-35	46.7	Diploma	28.9	Service	25.6
		35-45	3.3	Degree	67.8	Small scale manufacturing	15.6

The current study intended to know the most used social media by MEs in Moshi. Based on the research findings in figure 1, all of the participating enterprise had been using some forms of social media in communicating their businesses. It is revealed 50% prefers WhatsApp,

24.4% use Facebook, 23.3% Instagram, and 2.3% Twitter. This implies that most MEs use WhatsApp to communicate with their potential customers this might be due to the fact that most of the targeted customers use WhatsApp or more other social media sites. However during interview one of the respondents expressed her views on why they preferred to use WhatsApp more than other social network sites. This is how she said;

“WhatsApp is the most preferred social media site because we can interact so easier with our customers, also it provides room for direct contact with customer so it reduce presence of chaos and increase efficiency in business”.

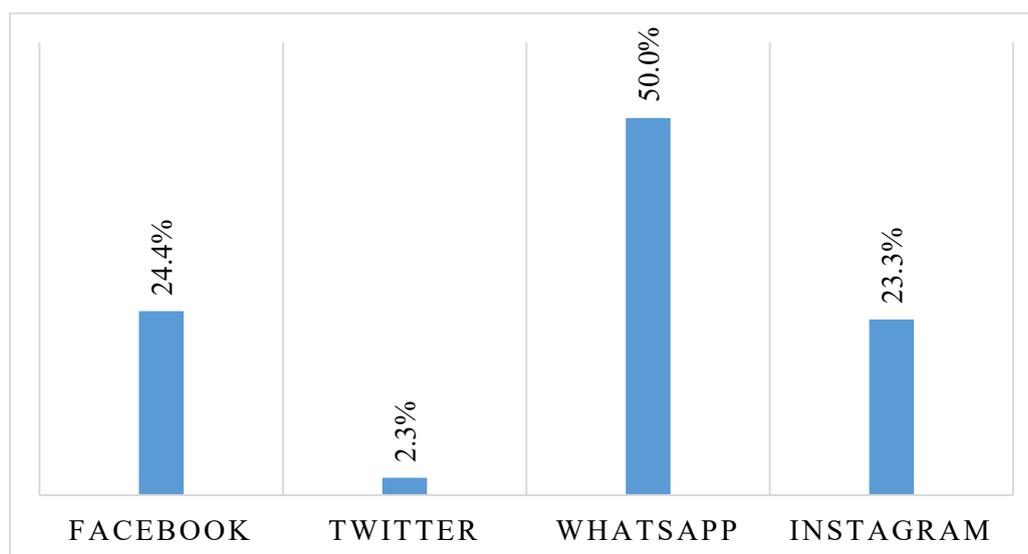


Figure 1: Social media used by Enterprises

The study sought to find when the enterprises started to using social media. Most of enterprises had started to use social media at different time, about 65.6% enterprises started to use social media over the past 5 years whereas 31.1% started to use social media between 6-10 years and 3.3% enterprises started to use social media above 10 years. Table 2 gives illustrative in terms of MEs' experience in use of social media. This is attributed by the fact that most of the enterprises started to use social media between 5 years ago and this is due to the increased access to ICT services and facilities especially affordable internet enabled mobile phones. This observation is supported by Novelli (2012) that the use of social media in businesses gained popularity in 2010 where by many people started to use social network site which influence most of enterprises to use it in sharing information with their key stakeholders.

Table 2:

Year in which Enterprises Started Using Social Media

Year of started	Frequency (N=90)	Percentage (%)
0-5	59	65.6
6-10	28	31.1
Above 10	3	3.3

The study also investigates the ability of entrepreneurs to approach customers through social media. Results in table 3 divulge that customers are likely to be approached through social media 97.8%. It was also established that most enterprises were able to reach more customers by using social media. This is supported by Eltantawy and Wiest (2011) and Oh

(2009) social media can be powerful casual communication tool, through which more customers can be approached and reached to expand and enhance the performance of businesses.

Table 3:

Customer approached through social media

Categories of answers	Frequency (N=90)	Percentage (%)
Customer are approached through social media	88	97.8
Customer are not approached through social media	2	2.2
Ability to reach customers by social media	85	94.4
Not able to reach customers by using social media	5	5.6

The study intended also to determine the influence of social media to the performance of MEs in the study area, where Findings in table 4 show the benefit social media on MEs performance. Benefit in increase number of customer the respondent rate as 1 preference while increase in sale was rate as 2 preference, the rating on increase of product and service awareness as 3 preference whereas profit maximization rated as 4 preference and the last preference was rated at 5 which is it help to increase brand image. Bhanot (2009) study the impact of social media on company performance found that social media help companies to reach more customers, also increase sale and enhance brand image of the companies.

Table 4:

Benefits of social media on business performance

Benefit of social media	Mean	Std deviation	Rank
Increase sale	4.6444	0.52598	2
Increase number of customer	4.6667	0.54049	1
Profit maximization	4.3444	0.62100	4
Increase product and service awareness	4.4556	0.67310	3
Enhance brand image	3.9778	0.76405	5

The study sought to find out the reasons or motives that driven an enterprises to use social media. The study findings disclose that most of MEs had different reasons towards the use of social media. It was established that 28% of the respondents use social media to reach more customers, 27% to satisfy their customer needs, 25% use social media just because their competitors do, and 20% use social media to supplementary the use of traditional media. This implies that the major reason to why they use social media was to reach large number of customer where by trough social media they can be able to communicate with many people at once and this is due to the increased pace of social media usage among different individual groups. With regard to the reasons why they use social media one respondent reported that:

“With social media it was possible to reach large number of customer compared to the other means of communication. Through social media which proved direct contact with customer it was very easy to obtained large number of targeted customer which makes it possible to sharing some information about business.

Table 5:
Reasons for using social media

Reasons for using social media	Mean	Percentage (%)	Rank
Competitors use it	4.0000	25	3
Reach more customer	4.6222	28	1
Supplement use of traditional media	3.3333	20	4
Satisfying my customer needs better	4.4111	27	2

As for the performance of micro enterprises, results in table 6 show that the coefficient of determination $R^2 = 0.553$. This indicates that the model is a good fit as about 55% of changes in performance of MEs are accounted for by changes in the explanatory variables (access to and use of Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, and Instagram). The remained is illustrated by variation of factors other than use of social media. Results also depicts that a test F-value is 7.007 and the critical value is 2.60 from our decision rule, we therefore accept the hypothesis that all else being equal, access to social media will be exhibit a linear relationship with performance of Micro Enterprises in Moshi, Tanzania. It is therefore concluded that the performance of Micro Enterprises is highly influenced by the use of social media among the owners-managers. These observations are in concord with Eltantawy and Wiest (2011) that social media are the most powerful casual communication tool, in organizing people on issue that have common interest for them.

Table 6:
Analysis of Variance- ANOVA^a

Model	Sum of squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Regression	1.125	3	.225	7.007	.000 ^b
Residual	2.697	84	.032		
Total	3.822	89			
R	.744 ^a				
R Square	.553				
Adjusted R Square	.538				

a. Dependent Variable: Performance of MEs,

b. Predictors: (Constant), Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, Instagram.

Also the study determined the challenges associated with the use of social media in business undertakings. The respondents were asked about the challenges facing them with the use of social media in their business. From the findings in table 7, risk and insecurity (M=1.86) were found to be the the key challenge facing many of the MEs in Moshi, followed by poor feedback from customer (M=1.76), and lack of customer awareness on use of social media (M=1.70).

Table 7:
Challenge associated with social media.

Challenge	Mean	Std deviation	Rank
Cost involves	1.6000	0.4926	5
Accessibility	1.6667	0.4740	4

Feedback from customer	1.7667	0.4253	2
Awareness	1.7000	0.4682	3
Risk and insecurity	1.8667	0.3418	1

5. Conclusion

This study examined the relationship between use of social media and performance of Micro Enterprises (MEs) in Moshi, Tanzania. Based on the study findings it has been depicted that these micro enterprises have been using social media to a large extent and this has contribute to better business performance. It has been evident that social media has helped these enterprises to reach out more customers and satisfy their needs, enhance brand awareness, customer base, profit gain, sales volume and brand image. With such performance benefits this study concludes that it is strategic imperative to make effective use of social media among owner-managers and their actual and potential customers. However awareness, risks and insecurity of information, and costs, among others, remain a challenge for MEs in using social media for business purposes in the context of developing countries like Tanzania. Therefore it is vital for owner-managers of micro enterprises to do critical analysis when it comes to the selection of whom to reach with the use of social media.

6. Managerial Implication, Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

The finding from the current study will benefit business owner-managers, micro, small and medium enterprise development agencies in Tanzania, Universities, a range of government agencies and stakeholders with interest in entrepreneurship development and will also serve as a frame of future research. The study has some methodological constraints. Firstly, data for the study was collected from selected owner-managers of MEs in Moshi. Hence the findings of the study cannot be generalized. Secondly the study is cross sectional in nature, because the data was collected at one point in time, therefore, the direct effects of the independent variable on the dependent variable are difficult to conclude. Therefore, future research should consider a longitudinal survey that will cover wider geographical zones in Tanzania. A qualitative design is recommended in order to explore an in depth understanding of the cause and effect relationship. Moreover, studies on financial and marketing aspect of social media and relative involvement associated with the possible solution toward the challenges of social media can also be done.

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